



SAN CONNECTIONS

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Groundbreaking for New \$3M Schuylkill Fish Ladder

On Monday, December 10 a ceremonial groundbreaking was held for a new fish ladder to be built alongside the Fairmount Dam behind the Museum of Art at the old Philadelphia Water Works. The current fish ladder, built in the 1970s, is too steep for the fish and prevents them from migrating farther upstream to spawn.

The new ladder will contain a chute with baffles, creating a series of shallow pools, each higher than the last, to allow the fish to enter, rest in the pools, and then move up the channel. The new ladder is expected to be completed by the Spring of 2009.

The Schuylkill has seen a resurgence of fish. There are now 45 varieties, including striped bass and shad.

SAN Annual Workshop a Success!

October 30, 2007

Montgomery Co. Community College
Pottstown, PA



About 80 SAN members attended the Annual Fall Workshop. The main focus of the workshop was to facilitate interaction among the technical workgroups. Presentations were made by leaders from the:

- ◆ Abandoned Mine Drainage Workgroup
- ◆ Agriculture Workgroup
- ◆ Stormwater Workgroup
- ◆ Pathogens & Compliance Workgroup
- ◆ Watershed Land Protection Collaborative, and
- ◆ Education and Outreach Committee

There was also a panel discussion about interaction with local decision-makers. The workshop was sponsored by the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary and facilitated by Dianne Russell, Institute for Conservation Leadership. There was also a field trip to the Spring Ford High School Stormwater Detention Basin Naturalization. And, an award was given to this year's Most Valuable SAN Member, Patty El-kis, for her leadership in the development of the Schuylkill Watershed Land Prioritization Model.



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Merck Settles Violations Related to June 2006 Fish Kill in Wissahickon Creek

On December 13, 2007, U.S. Attorney Pat Meehan, the EPA and PA DEP announced a settlement with Merck over violations of federal and state water pollution control regulations at its pharmaceutical plant. Merck discharged potassium thiocyanate causing extensive fish kills in the Wissahickon Creek on June 14th and 15th and also resulting in the Philadelphia Water Department temporarily closing its Schuylkill River drinking water intake.

Merck will pay \$10M to put into place systems that will prevent future dangerous discharges at their facility. Merck will spend approximately \$9M for extensive environmental projects. A Consent Decree requires Merck to pay \$1,575,000 in penalties for past violations: \$750,000 to the United States; \$750,000 to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and \$75,000 to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

The Merck facility located in West Point, Montgomery County discharges pollutants to the Upper Gwynedd Township Publicly Owned Treatment Works. The treated effluent is discharged into the Wissahickon Creek, a tributary of the Schuylkill River.

The proposed consent decree includes interim measures undertaken already to: prevent discharges without preapproval; create a tracking system for waste handling; create a task force to assess the system throughout the facility and impose increased testing and assessment tools for waste stream. The decree contains Merck's commitment to long term remedial measures including: a prevention program; enhanced wastewater management program and chemical management accountability system for the facility. The estimated costs of these measures is in excess of \$10M.

The proposed consent decree also includes extensive environmental projects designed to improve the water quality and/or protect the Wissahickon as a source of drinking water. Merck has committed to: restoration of a segment of the Wissahickon Creek to improve the water quality of this key tributary of the Schuylkill River; creation of a wetlands on a 10 acre parcel of property adjacent to the creek; purchase and installation of an aquatic biomonitoring system that monitors fish activity to give the Philadelphia Water Department an early warning system regarding materials in the Wissahickon Creek that may constitute a threat to the drinking water; the purchase and installation of an enhanced Automated Dissolved Oxygen Controls at the Upper Gwynedd Treatment Plant. In addition, Merck will contribute \$4.5M toward the purchase of land adjacent to the creek that will have restricted use and open space easements in perpetuity.

Another Fish Kill in Skippack Creek

High levels of chlorine were the cause of a fish kill in Skippack Creek on December 5, 2007 just below the Moyer Packing Co. (MOPAC) rendering plant in Franconia, Montgomery County. Thousands of minnows, white suckers, bass, frogs, tadpoles, worms and leeches were killed.

MOPAC has accepted responsibility for the fish kill. The chlorine release was caused by a malfunctioning chlorination system which treats wastewater before discharging into Skippack Creek. MOPAC is planning significant capital upgrades to its wastewater treatment system. Work on those upgrades has already begun. The improvements are required by an agreement made with the State of Pennsylvania after two illegal discharges from MOPAC caused fish kills in 2006. The Smithfield Beef Group of Green Bay, Wisconsin is MOPAC's parent company.

Pine Forest, PA Treatment of Acid Mine Drainage

An acid mine treatment demonstration project at Pine Forest, PA was placed into service in October 2007. The project consists of a flushable anoxic limestone drain, three settling ponds, and wetland treatment system. 5,000 gpm discharge. The goal is to eliminate the acid mine drainage (reduce metals and acidity loading) to Little Wolf Creek, a tributary to Mill Creek.

For more information contact:

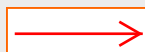
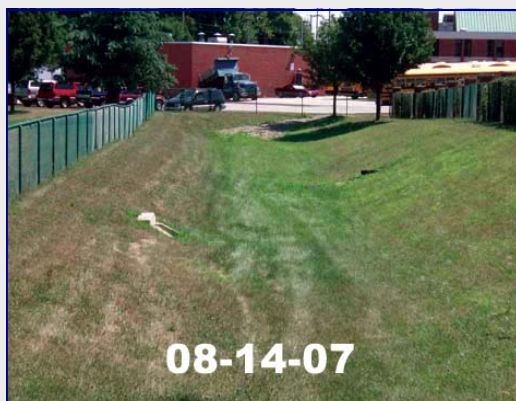
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Detention Basin Modifications at Norristown High School

Norristown High School has completed the construction phase of its detention basin modifications. Now they are just waiting for the plants to grow. Here are some “before” and “during growth” pictures. After photos will be available in the spring.

For more information contact: Paula Conolly, paula.conolly@phila.gov



DATES TO REMEMBER

Jan. 10, 2008	SAN Planning Meeting @ EPA Philly
Jan. 16, 2008	SAN Ag Meeting @ BCCD in Reading
Jan. 24, 2008	 SAN Executive Steering Committee Conf. Call
Feb. 6, 2008	SAN Ed/Outreach Meeting @ SRHA in Pottstown
Feb. 14, 2008	 SAN Planning Meeting @ EPA Philly
March 1, 2008	Schuylkill Congress @ MCCC in Pottstown
March 12, 2008	SAN AMD Meeting @ DEP in Pottsville
March 13, 2008	SAN Planning Meeting @ EPA Philly

Ideas for the Next Edition ?

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White House Issues Guidelines for Consumers on the Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs

In February 2007, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy issued the first consumer guidance for the Proper Disposal of Prescription Drugs. The public is encouraged to take advantage of pharmaceutical take-back programs or household hazardous waste collection programs that accept pharmaceuticals. If there are no take-back programs nearby, consumers should contact their state and local waste management authorities and/or follow the disposal instructions that might be printed on the label or accompanying patient information. For more information, go to: http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/factsht/proper_disposal.html

Traffic Circle Rain Garden at Springside School, Philadelphia

The Springside School, located at 8000 Cherokee Street in Philadelphia, recently installed a traffic circle rain garden as part of its stormwater management concept for the campus. Funding for the design came from the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, but Springside used its own resources for construction. The garden will help reduce the flow of stormwater that runs off to the Wissahickon Creek and reduce summer temperatures caused by the urban heat island effect. And, the plants, recommended by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society will attract birds and pollinating insects, will be able to survive periods of both drought and heavy rain, and will be tolerant of salt and other parking lot pollutants. To view a slideshow of the construction, go to:

<http://www.springside.org/home/content.asp?id=4053>



SAN Drinking Water Awards — Apply Now

Have you protected drinking water sources in the Schuylkill River Watershed through educational programs and land management practices? Do you work for a school, college, or university? Then you are eligible to apply for a SAN Drinking Water Award! (Except that previous winners are not eligible to receive the award again for 5 years.) **The deadline for applications is March 10, 2008.** For additional information contact

Lisa Trakis, EPA Region 3, at trakis.lisa@epa.gov or 215-814-5433.



The award program will be held on May 6, 2008 at the Fairmont Waterworks Interpretive Center and will be hosted by Maria LaRosa, CBS 3 Meteorologist.